

manner, not altogether unlike some of the apses of Norman architecture, as at Winchester Cathedral. This structure is reputed to be the tomb of Theodor, tyrant of Agrigento.

In buildings to be viewed from a great distance, the great art consists in making them appear pleasing from every point of view. When was in this we great a master on in geometry and construction; not only do they still conform to the test of a front view, but when viewed diagonally and in various other ways they still conform to pyramidal outlines, whether passed down their utmost breadth, or through the distended open part of them which appear in a side view.



Diagonal Outline of the Spire of St. Dunstons in the East, London.

How all the moderns have succeeded in steeples-building by piling one discordant heap upon another, may be gathered from the almost universal contempt with which the architect, the architectural critic, and the public in general, view our modern steeples; to raise upon each other, to nurse broken outlines, imitations of delicate small works of ancient architecture which stood on the ground, cannot satisfy the mind or the eye; these things all require to be designed on purpose; the higher the stages of the work ascend, they are more and more restricted in general magnitude by the outlines of the pyramid, yet from their superior altitude they require to be designed in a larger and simpler style, otherwise, not being read by the eye, they become confused, and thence useless. The steeple of the new church at Shadwell, from being furnished with a good outline, has received almost general praise, although its details are coarse and its materials are mean and fragile; the easy labour of drawing two pencil lines, lines, meeting at its summit, guided by its designer, this praise, and saved him from the reprehension given to many works, the details of which would rank higher if placed in proper situations. The author always knew that good steeples were formed on this principle, and he has been much pleased by finding the boundary lines remaining in pencil upon ancient drawings of them.—*Essay on the Decline of Excellence in Modern English Buildings.* By Alfred Bartholomew, F.R.S.A.

ANTWERP AND LONDON.—In 1312, when the disputes between the Archduke Maximilian and the bourgeoisie of Bruges ended in his blockading Bruges, and thus striking a fatal blow at the prosperity of a city that had been the great depot for the production of the north and south of Europe, its trade was transferred to Antwerp, which had long been a formidable rival; and this added its previous advantages, gave it a preponderance in the scale of commerce, and it became the warehouse of the civilised world, where merchants from all lands congregated to buy and sell. To accommodate these visitors in the transaction of their business, "the Bourne" was constructed in 1531, a building furnished Greenwich with his idea for the Exchange in London, which was originally styled "Britania's Bourse." In the same manner the ancient provisions of the trades of Antwerp furnished us with the prototypes of much of the pagantry formerly exhibited in the early majority provisions of London; for the similarity between them is too striking to be the result of accident.—*Purcell's Lord Mayor's Payments.*

## METROPOLITAN IMPROVEMENTS, &c.

The following are extracts from the 20th Report of her Majesty's Commissioners of Woods, Forests, Land Revenue, &c., being the 14th annual report:—

### HYDE PARK AND VICTORIA PARK.

The report also contains a schedule of property purchased under the authority of the act of 5 Victoria, sess. 2, cap. 19, to empower the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Woods, &c., "to form a new opening from the Knightsbridge-road into Hyde Park, and a new opening from High-street, Kensington, into an intended new road across the Palace-gate;" the total purchase-money for which property amounts to 1,980*l.*, and a schedule of property purchased under the authority of the act of 5 Victoria, sess. 2, cap. 20, to extend an opening in the 4th and 5th years of her present Majesty, for enabling Her Majesty's Commissioners of Woods, &c., to purchase certain lands for Victoria Park.

### NEW HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.

In the appendix will be found a report from Mr. Barry of the progress made, up to the present time, in the erection of the new Houses of Parliament. The following is that gentleman's report:—

### "Architect's Report as to the Present State of the Building."

"The curtain portions of the river front and a considerable portion of the north and south fronts are carried up to their full height in readiness for the roofs. The central portion of the river front and the wings of the building are a little above the same level, and probably will attain their full height in about four months from this time. Considerable progress is made with the superstructure of the western portion of the south front, the Victoria tower, the Royal Gallery, the House of Lords, the central tower and adjoining corridors, and the west front towards New Palace-yard, all which portions of the building are upon an average about 15 feet above the level of the Trinity standard of high-water.

"The stone courses to be supplied in great abundance from the neighbourhood of Austin, in Yorkshire, for the external masonry, and there is no deficiency of supply of a stone which has recently been employed, from Caen, in Normandy, for the internal masonry. The contractors have increased their number, and heads at the quarry to about 300 men, and have provided additional tackle, horses, &c., by which and other arrangements the supply of stone for the future will be even still more certain and abundant than it has hitherto been. The work executed and the contractors' arrangements for the progress of it at the building still continue to merit my entire approbation."

"CHARLES BARRY.

"Westminster, August 12, 1843."

### METROPOLITAN IMPROVEMENTS.

In our last report we stated the progress which had been made in purchasing the interests in the property in the several lines of improvement authorized to be made under the Acts 3 & 4 Victoria, c. 77, and 4 Victoria, c. 12; and we have now to state that on three several lines, up to the 5th of January last, we have completed purchases to the amount in the whole of 300,755*l.* 5*s.* 4*d.*, and have contracted for further purchases to the amount in the whole of 124,641*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.*; viz:—

1. In the line from Oxford-street to Holborn we have completed purchases to the amount of 166,851*l.* 12*s.* 10*d.*, and we have contracted for further purchases to the amount of 15,906*l.* 13*s.*
2. In the line from Bow-street to Charlotte-street, Bloomsbury, we have completed purchases to the amount of 35,464*l.* 11*s.*, and have contracted for further purchases to the amount of 26,185*l.*
3. In the line from the London Docks to Spitalfields Church we have completed purchases to the amount of 44,157*l.* 10*s.*, and have contracted for further purchases to the amount of 71,102*l.* 10*s.* 6*d.*
4. In the line from Coventry-street to Long-acre we have completed purchases to the amount of 34,291*l.* 5*s.* 10*d.*, and have contracted for further purchases to the amount of 78,477*l.*
5. In the line from East Smithfield to Rosemary-lane we have not completed any purchase, but we have contracted for purchases to the amount of 2,670*l.*

A statement is appended to the report showing our receipt and expenditure in respect of monies applicable to these improvements, by which it appears, that of the sum of 500,000*l.*, mentioned in our last report to have been borrowed of the Equitable Assurance Company for the purposes of these improvements, upon the security of certain portions of the land revenue of the Crown in the county of Middlesex, there remained a balance of 166,918*l.* 1*s.* 10*d.*, on the 5th of January last.

### THE PARKS.—KENSINGTON, ROBERTS' PAGES, &c.

It having been deemed expedient that the Crown should possess the freehold of the property to a certain distance immediately eastward and westward of the new entrance from the Knightsbridge-road into Hyde Park (now called the Albert Gate), for the purpose of obtaining an exercising a controlling power as to the style and character of the buildings to be erected on the ground adjacent to that new entrance, we have to report, that agreements have been entered into for such intended purchases, and for letting to Mr. T. Cubitt the disposable building ground eastward and westward of the new entrance.

We have also to report that, under the powers given by the same Act, we have agreed for the purchase of the three houses in the High-street at Kensington, required for opening the intended new communication between Kensington and Bayswater; which not only forms an essential part of the plan for letting for villas the site of the late Royal kitchen-garden at Kensington, but will be a great accommodation to the rapidly increasing population in that district.

To furtherance of that plan, a new sewer for the drainage of the intended houses has been nearly completed; but, owing probably to a very great suspension of building speculations which has existed during the past year, we have as yet agreed to let only two out of the thirty-three sites designed for new building, to be erected on this ground.

It was mentioned in our last report, that the value of this ground to be let on building leases would be sufficient to form a fund for acquiring and establishing a new kitchen garden, to be attached to Windsor Castle, as well as for the improvement of other royal kitchen-gardens; and that approved plans for forming such new kitchen-garden on part of the Crown's waste at Frogmore were then in progress.

Under the Act which authorized these arrangements, the monies required for "forming, improving, laying out, planning, and enclosing this new royal kitchen-garden, and in erecting, making, and completing all requisite houses, buildings, walls, fences, drains, and other works connected therewith," have in the mean time been defrayed out of the land revenues of the Crown, as the funds to arise from the value of the late kitchen-garden at Kensington have not, for the reasons before mentioned, yet become available for this service.

The new bridges for connecting the Regent's Park with that portion of the Primrose-hill estate which, under the authority of the 5th & 6th of Victoria, c. 78, we had lately purchased from the provost and fellows of Eton College, having been completed and open to the public since the date of our last report, we are now in negotiation with the lease of the college, with a view to the purchase of his interest, which will not cost less than the year 1859 and if we fail in obtaining such terms as shall appear to be reasonable, it is our intention to avail ourselves of the powers of the Act in question, to have the value assessed by a jury.

Since the passing of the Act of 4th & 5th Victoria, cap. 27, which rested in us all the requisite powers for acquiring the lands intended to form a new park in the eastern part of the metropolis, we have agreed for the purchase of the freehold interests in 101 acres out of 250 acres comprised in the plan, and authorized by the said Act to be purchased for forming such new park; and having given the proper notices to all the parties whose lands or interests will be required, we are proceeding as expeditiously as possible to complete the purchase of all the still outstanding freehold interests, before we begin to deal with those of leases, sub-leases, or occupiers; and for the present the monies set apart for this service remain invested in Eton-queer hills.